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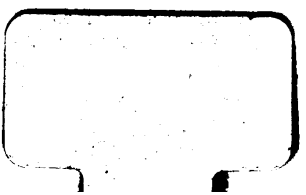

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Two hundred copies of this book were printed on Van Gelder hand-made paper in the month of February, 1894.

THE WHITE ROSE KNIGHT

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

MARGARET P. HILLHOUSE

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He being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time: for his soul pleased the Lord: wherefore hasted He to take him away from among the wicked.

WISDOM, 4—13, 14.

TO THE
MEMORY OF MY BELOVED NEPHEW
THOMAS HILLHOUSE, JR.

The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God: in the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, but they are in peace.

WISDOM, 3—1, 2, 3.

WDR 19FEB'36

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THE LEGEND OF THE WHITE ROSE KNIGHT

THE LEGEND OF THE WHITE ROSE KNIGHT

ONCE, on a night in leafy June,
A garden basked at nocturnal noon.
The slumbering flowers hung their heads,
But each fair sleeper perfume sheds —
Unconscious incense — for, through the sky,
The queen of the stars was sailing by —
Selene, whose robe cast golden gleams
On the dark green sward and the running streams.

Alone, in a latticed window above,
Was a woman as fair as the Goddess of Love.
The regal lady floating aloof
Before this beauty her crown must doff;
For, within the form of this mortal queen,
A soul immortal dwelt, I ween.
She leaned her cheek on the casement nigh,
And thought of love, and breathed a sigh.

The White Rose Knight, beside the tower,
Her loveliness saw and felt its power;

"O heavenly dove, so far above me,
In a golden halo I fain must love thee!
Could I only thy slender fingers press,
Or kiss the hem of thy flowing dress,
I would gather my costliest incense sweet,
And lay the offering at thy feet."

So, upward the White Rose soaring climbed,
A daring Knight as was ever rhymed!
Till at last his silver helmet's crest
Bent toward the lady and touched her vest;
She felt the brush of his velvet hand,
The breath of his incense her red lips fanned,
And her slender arms, in the pale moonlight,
Reached through the window and clasped the Knight.

Lifted above this world, apart,
She stood with his head upon her heart;
And felt that the hand of a loving fate
Had brought to her soul its wandering mate;
Yet, in her bliss she felt a pang,
And old-time words in her memory rang,
As the curling tendrils of the vine
About the curve of her waist entwine;
And the White Rose, lifting his dewy lips,
Presses them to her finger tips;
And, linked with his nodding feathers fair,
Lay a clinging ring of her dusky hair.

Over Selene's smiling face
Drifted a veil of cloudy lace;

A tremor, betokening coming woes,
Shook each green leaf on the trembling Rose;
The swaying of his stalwart form
Told of the anguish of a storm;
For he knew full well that upon his side
Was a thorn that would mortally wound his bride.

"Love of my life," he whispering said,
"Would that we two in death were laid!
The head that reposed upon thy heart
From its cradling home must live apart!
The hand that touched thy damask cheek
Must never again its softness seek,
And these eyes that would always look in thine
Must henceforth in lonely longing pine!
Oh, well-beloved, I would have thy nest
Safe in the shade of my branches rest;
But already upon thy bosom's sheen
The point of my spear has pressed, I ween,
And a single drop from thy sacred breast
Has stained the plume of my knightly crest!
Did I venture to climb within thy bower
Thou wouldst be disgraced, my pale Star flower!
Espirito Santo[1] thou shalt be,
The Holy Dove Blossom forever to me.
I will never betray thy innocent trust
By trailing thy silver wings in dust;
For tho' all on earth were blind to the shame,
I would know that it rested on thy name,

[1] Spanish name of an orchid.

And, with head bowed down and arms reversed,
Would walk through life a man accursed,
No more a Knight with a bleeding wound,
But a caitiff, crawling along the ground!
Never a rose as pure as flame,
But a loathsome bramble, steeped in shame!"
The White Rose gasped and seemed to pray,
And from the lady turned away.

Low, on the tesselated stone,
The lady sank like the poplar down
That gently falls from the stately trees,
Snatched from its home by the passing breeze.
The moonlight, streaming through the blind,
About her marble form did wind,
A robe of silver lacery,
All delicate with tracery.
'T is but the shadow of the rose
That, mantle like, about her flows.

Upon her white, enraptured face,
Faint, shadowy smiles the tear-drops chase;
And in her eyes' profoundest deeps
An ecstasy of love still sleeps;
As from her parted lips there came
A quivering breath, a sigh, a name,
With reverence the expectant air
Received the accents of her prayer,
And to the Rose, who stood alone,
Wafted her simple orison.

"Who am I, Lord, to be so blessed by thee?
Thou who didst bear the cross the cross hast laid on me,
And for another's sake, I, too, shall weep and wake.

"Before the entrance of my home thou 'st planted
A guard of honor, firm, undaunted;
No lawless enemy to pass his sword will try:

"And not alone from others he will ward me,
But from his own strong self will guard me;
And this great love sublime thou givest to be mine!

"Only when bowed before thine altar here
Will I behold the wound made by his spear;
Unseen by all shall rest that ruby on my breast.

"To live within the life he lives without,
Strong, steadfast, loving, pure, unstained by doubt,
Unworthy tho' I be, grant, gracious Lord, to me!

"Thus, as the veilèd moon, still onward bound,
Illumines all the cloud-world round,
This hidden love of mine throughout my life shall shine.

"My soul doth magnify
The Lord of earth and sky!
O holy, happy Three, Hail! Benedicite!"

Year after year the Rose Bush grew,
And to himself all passers drew.
Many a bird, in search of rest,
Within his branches built her nest;
While ever and always his blossoms white
Grew larger and fairer by day and night.
Some were to the hospital sent,
To cheer poor souls with weakness spent;
And some were laid on the altar wide,
At Easter and at Whitsuntide;
And some were twined in a bridal wreath,
And smiled on the timorous face beneath;
And once, in the vaulted senate hall,
A statesman heard the White Rose call,
And summon him back from devious wiles
To the open path where honor smiles.

And on one high day, when, through the street,
The people pressed with hurrying feet
To gaze on a blood-stained banner, torn,
Which through their weeping ranks was borne,
Their wondering eyes upon it fixed
Beheld a wreath of roses mixed
With its sacred folds; each beautiful head
Covered the spot where a hero bled!

Onward and upward, as though inspired,
The Rose to grander heights aspired;
Till at length he placed his mailed hand
Upon the church that near did stand;

Along whose roof, still higher, higher,
He to the cross drew ever nigher;
Until, one day as the sun arose,
Behold! on the cross lay a wondrous Rose!

"The cross at last has found its crown,"
Cried a passer-by with sullen frown.
"A crown of thorns is meet indeed,
For the cross on which we all must bleed!"
"Not so," said the gentle priest, with a smile;
"Let no dark fancies thy faith beguile;
Not a crown of thorns but a wreath of blooms
Sheds round the cross its sweet perfumes:
A garland of luminous blossoms, white
As the unstained honor of a Knight."

Thus, the fair Rose, a sentinel good,
Before the shrine of the White Dove stood.
No sinful thought or sordid care
Could ever presume to enter there;
Nor evil thing from fen or field
Could pierce the screen of his emerald shield;
And, as he lived, he kept his eye
Fixed on the sun of truth, on high—
But never again, by any chance,
Did the glorious Knight turn a backward glance
To the bower where, sheltered by his strong arm,
In honor inviolate, free from harm,
And robed in innocence pearly white,
Dwelt the unwed bride of the White Rose Knight!

ENVOY

Let none believe that the legend told
Is the misty reflection of stories old!
Such ladies live in our midst to-day,
And before such altars always pray;
And I, myself, have seen the vine
Round the uplifted cross entwining,
And tossing its sprays from the highest pine;
While the sun on the cypress swamp was shining,
In the cane-breaks by the sluggish river,
Or where gray, trailing mosses quiver,
Its star-like petals shimmering peep
Through the dark morass when the true stars sleep.

There are those who doubt if a rose can speak,
And think of a flower as something weak.
Yet the flowers, and not the waving corn,
Caught the Master's eye on that Sabbath morn;
And their simple beauty, better far,
Expressed the strength of a changeless trust,
Than the useful grain which, with heat and jar,
The reapers' hands would soon lay in dust;
And thus, a rose can exceeding well
The story of Knightly honor tell.
Fair gentles all, God grant you might
To steadfast live as the White Rose Knight!

FRAGMENTS
FROM "ADELLE" AND "VIRGINIA"

SERENADE, FROM "ADELLE"

AKE, Lady! Awake!
The cool night air is blowing,
The river swiftly flowing
Down to the sea;
Then turn to me —
As the broad river, tost and lone,
Turns to the sea and stills its moan.

Wake, Lady! Awake!
The jasmine sheds its fragrance on the air,
Whilst thou, my love, more fair,
Turnest away,
Repent, I pray!
Give me the perfume of thy life, dear flower,
Nor let me languish here beneath thy bower!

Wake, Lady! Awake!
The slender palms stand ever side by side;
And in the garden lovingly abide.
Then, fairest maid,
Be not afraid!
But lay in mine thy slender hand,
As leaf toward leaf the loving palm-trees stand.
Wake, Lady! Awake!

AUBADO, FROM "ADELLE"

HE holy hour of the dawn draws nigh,
The morning star floats in the amber sky.
Across the water breezes newly born
Whisper the advent of the coming morn.

As the broad river to the sea
Speeds, so, Beloved, unto thee
Come I, myself, obliterate—
Lost in thy love's immensity.

And, as the jasmine on the air
Breathes forth its fragrance, so, O fair
Young love, to thee I give my life —
To bless thee being all my care.

Or, as the palm-trees side by side,
So, my beloved, may we abide,
Walking through life still hand in hand
Together, lover with his bride.

The holy hour of the dawn draws nigh,
The morning star floats in the amber sky,
Across the water breezes newly born
Whisper the advent of the coming morn.

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF SUCCOR FROM "ADELLE"

H, august, powerful, great Mother,
Throned amid starry points that stud the sky!
Thou knowest all. Thou knowest where doth lie
My best beloved, my only one, bend from on high,
Put forth thy strength and heal him ere he die!

Send out the Frost, emblem of life, not death,
To us who languish 'neath the sun's hot glow,
See where before thy sacred feet I, bending low,
Own the great love, whose flood doth ever flow
Through my whole being, passionate but slow.

Virginal Princess, do not look so white, so cold, so calm!
Thou never knewest the pains of love,
Thou wast a maiden always, and didst move
Through all thy youth as gentle waters rove,
Midst banks of mosses, under garlands wove

Of smilax and of jessamine. But no, O Mother,
Thou hast suffered! Thou didst hear the wail
Of thy dear Son; and thou didst see them nail
His sacred flesh, and hear them rail
At his sublimest patience. Hail, O hail!

Mother of Sorrows, in this stricken town,
Are countless mothers agonized like thee!
With anguish swept his mother bends the knee.
In thy great pity listen unto me!
Give me my love, or take me to thy heart.
For without love I cannot live below,
My famished nature craves its comfort so!

FRAGMENT NO. 1, FROM "VIRGINIA"

O thee, O God, each heart 's revealed;
Each insect, leaf, and tiny shell,
And bird, doth in thy memory dwell,
And in thy Book of Life is sealed.

And so I cast out every fear.
Within my cell as in my home,
Love dwells; I never am alone,
For the All-Father 's near.

Take, Holy Spirit, in thy grace,
My life to carve and mold!
I am but part of thy most manifold
Creation. Give to me my place!

FRAGMENT NO. 2, FROM "VIRGINIA"

H ye palmettoes, that like watch-towers,
Guard the approach to that fair island home,
There lies your destiny, ye cannot roam;
The Will that placed you limited your powers.

O whippoorwills, that in the eventide,
Mournfully bid adieu unto the sun,
In the same cadence must thy music run;
Ye cannot turn a single note aside.

Ye perfumed, golden, trailing jessamines,
Without a single struggle or wild prayer,
Ye cast perpetual fragrance on the air,
And all the forest with thy glory shines.

And thou, O delicate and rosy shell,
'T is no fault of thy own, no err, no breach
Of Nature's laws that strands thee on the beach,
Rent from the sea-weeds where thy sisters dwell.

Each of you lives a simple, lawful life,
Fulfils your fate, and without pain or fear
Meets the Inevitable drawing near —
How calm your destiny, in mine what strife!

. . . . . .

When the creation had been finished,
God unto man, the latest of his creatures,
Gave no distinctive laws, no salient features,
But unto him he said:

"On thee, O Adam, I this gift bestow,
Freedom of choice, nor mortal or immortal
shalt thou be,
Nor of this world, nor of the heavenly.
From thine own self must flow

"The force that shall direct thy whole career:
Thou canst choose ease, and into lower forms
Descend and live for sense; or, amid storms
And anguish reach the spiritual sphere."

O wondrous difference betwixt the shell and me!
Freedom of choice, strange attribute of ours,
Bestowed upon us in primeval hours;
Awful, sublime responsibility!

FRAGMENT NO. 3, FROM "VIRGINIA"

Scene, night. A Convent chapel. Nuns heard chanting in the distance. VIRGINIA *before the altar in prayer pauses, as memories crowd upon her.*

THIS is the last night of my life,
To-morrow I must die,
Virginia will be lost in dim obscurity—
No more a daughter, never to be wife!

Among the throng who come to see,
None, none will know
The curse that working slow,
Brought me to this supremest agony.

I cannot fix my mind upon devotion!
All my life past
Flits by, scenes moving fast,
With undulating, dizzy motion.

Childhood and youth before me lie,
And this is all—
I pass away to-morrow—none will call
Me "wife" or "mother"; *O my father's sigh!*

Ah, memory of babyhood,
Mocking so quaintly,
This place, these lights, this chanting saintly —
And yet, was that all *wrong*, and this all *good?*

On a dark night in October,
From the turpentine plantation,
Thro' the forest grim and sober,
Lost in wondering cogitation,
By an unseen river flowing,
I, a little child, was going.

Hand clasped fast in old Maum Esther's,
Soft pine-needles under foot,
Moaning pine-trees at their vespers,
Past a blackened, upturned root,
Toward a glimmering light in distance,
On I went, without resistance.

Now a shy hare leaping by,
Sent the dry leaves stirring, creaking,
And as falling from the sky,
Came the gray owl's mournful shrieking,
Like a wandering child in pain:
Near, far off, then near again.

We the glowing light approaching,
Ruddy, darting flames behold,
Casting shadows huge enveloping
The wild forms still and cold,
Seated waiting for the Power
To inspire them in that hour.

From rude log-cabin quarters
    Had gathered motley groups;
Ancient couples with their daughters,
    Children, lusty youths in troops,—
All breathlessly await the sign,
Announcing present the Divine.

The Pentecostal tongues of flame
    Fell, and a slender negress rose,
Called once upon our Saviour's name;
    Then a strange veil of pallor flows
Over her moved and dusky face;
She standing shaken in her place.

Over her eyes unconsciousness
    Spread, and a faint ecstatic smile
Stole to her lips, upon her breast
    She clasped her hands and sighed a while;
Then crying, "Oh, my God! My God!"
Sank motionless upon the sod.

An improvisatrice arose,
    With voice so sweet, so clear,
The aisles of pine-trees, rows on rows,
    Bent down their heads to hear
The Spirit words, and music gave,
Whose sound went echoing wave on wave.

Linked with her voice in unison,
    Concurrent voices swelled and died;
Raised in a wild diapason,
    While Nature's harp-strings sighed

In plaintive cadence on the breeze,
Æolian music in the trees.

More weird and ghostly grew the scene,
    The whole assembly swayed.
One, with a conscience stricken through,
    Cried out, and wept, and prayed;
Sometimes a dark face caught the light,
Then swaying backward, sank in night.

Again that penetrating voice,
  Floated upon the air.
In man's salvation to rejoice,
  Or sunk in mournful prayer—
" Unto the cross of Christ I flee,
O Lord, have mercy upon me!

" O Lord, have mercy on me!
O Lord, have mercy on me!
I'll fall upon my knees and face the rising sun.
O Lord, have mercy on me!"

SOUTHERN SILHOUETTES

THE SAND-DUNES

AND-DUNES in the salt winds drifting,
Restless hills, forever shifting,
Not a leaf or blade of green,
In thy lonely waste is seen,
Lying in the pale moonlight,
Like vast snow-drifts cold and white.

North Island, South Carolina.

THE BAYOU

HE quiet mirror of molten gold
Lies under the motionless sky;
No cloud is reflected upon its face,
No palm-tree with its slender grace
Uprears its crest on high—
Not even the cry of a bird to break
The silence that shrouds the lonely lake.

Let us not pause upon its brink,
Lest the spell invest our souls!
We might lie there and dream for years,
Unknowing angers, or loves, or fears,
While the sleepy water rolls
Its drowsy current through mosses gray,
In the balmy night, in the sultry day.

Its golden satin bosom is pure
From the touch of bow or oar;
Forever beneath the azure sky
Its warm yet passionless waters lie
As they rested ages before,
Ere the white man with his restless brain
Stood there with his burden of love and pain.

Alabama.

THE CORDELIER

H, do not think I 'm a Domingo,
And speak a funny foreign lingo,
Or an ugly roustabout upon the levee;
No, I 'm a French Creole,
I can sail and I can pole,
My name is Achille Françoise Louis Petit.

Oh, who would drag a basket round the streets,
Crying "Oranges" to every one he meets,
When he could own a boat upon the pier—
From the Spanish Fort take out
Pretty ladies in that boat?
I 'm a black-eyed, laughing, singing Cordelier!

"Oh, pray, fair ladies, take my little boat,
In just a moment we will be afloat!
The mid-day sun is shining through a mist,
You 'll hear the noon bell if you only list,
A breeze is coming which the sail will swell,
So, step on board—*and now I must cordell!*

"Passing the rope about my waist securely,
Who could e'er tread the footpath more demurely?
And yet, I make a point when on the bay,
Of listening to all fair ladies say;

And sometimes, I assure you, I do hear
Things that do seem to me extremely queer.

" 'T was not so long ago I took to sail,
Ladies who told a most peculiar tale,
Of beings living in a world above—
Not saints, or angels, though they live in love—
And one called Venus—and they said that she
Was born of foam out of the great blue sea!

" Now the canal is passed, and spread before
Stretches the rippled lake from shore to shore;
The breeze has caught the sail, the pennant floats
Extended, and still dimmer grow the boats
Tied to the pier; we bid them all farewell,
I leap on deck, and now no more cordell!

" But that same Venus of whom I was telling,
Possessed a faculty for sorrow quelling,
And sometimes she would leave her starry home,
And drawn by doves down to the earth would come,
To visit simple shepherd lads, and talk
With them for hours, and in green meadows walk.

" Now, ever since I heard this wondrous strain,
I 've hoped she 'd come down to Lake Pontchartrain,
But tho' I 've watched I never yet have seen
Any one here who bore her gentle mien—
But ah! at last she 's here; I see her now,
With eyes downcast, and sitting in the bow!

"We near our goal, the West End comes in sight,
Would you could see it all lit up at night!
Bounding I reach the shore and knot the rope
About my waist; my heart beats high with hope.
I care not for the toil, but strain and pull
Beside the still canal — my cup quite full.
For you 'll alight, and I, O happy youth!
Will help fair Venus to the bank in truth!

"Oh, who would drag a basket round the streets,
Crying 'Oranges!' to every one he meets,
When he could own a boat upon the pier —
From the Spanish Fort take out
Pretty ladies in that boat?
I 'm a black-eyed, laughing, singing Cordelier!"

New Orleans,
Spanish Fort to West End.

TO LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN

YSTERIOUS lake, what miracle hath changed
thy nature so
That thy low banks no more thy wavelets
know?
Where are thy bitter waters, silent lake, that ever
more to bird and plant
Refused a drop to slake its thirst in the hot sun?
Now in thy bounty thou dost offer
Unto each small, winged songster,
And to the little flowers that edge thy brink,
Draughts of such sweetness that they bend toward thee,
And from thy fountains drink.
'T is the same wonder wrought in each of us when
Love divine
Pours itself into hearts as bitter with taint of self as e'er
was thine,
With the salt sea. As the on-rushing river
Into thy bosom emptying its wealth transformed thee,
So I, too, when the heavenly flood is poured into my breast,
Yield myself unto my beloved, giving peace, joy, and rest.

New Orleans.

MARIAR TURPENTINE

PON a village sidewalk
Of undulating clay,
Some loitering Northern tourists stood
One early April day.
The hour was barely seven o'clock,
Their car upon a siding;
Until the track was cleared for them,
They waited, breakfast biding.

They gazed across some broken rails,
Where once had been a fence
Of ornamental, quaint design —
But, oh, that was long since!
They saw the lawn, once smooth and green,
Now rough from want of care,
And the broken balustrade that edged
The cracked piazza-stair.

Above, the paint, in many spots,
Had vanished from their sight.
The blinds were gone, or on one hinge
Dangled in sorry plight;
But on the rustic rail that stretched
To guard the pasture fields,
A row of shining milk-pans hung,
Like Scandinavian shields.

Just then in garments coarse and thin,
Came limping down the way,
An aged negress, bent and sad,
With wool of iron gray;
A cracker sun-hat on her head
Rested its homely crown,
And her toil-worn feet protected were
By strips of leather, brown.

"Come, Aunty, tell us who once lived
In the old mansion there,
With Grecian pillars, hedges green,
Fountains, and terraced stair?"
Her stiff limbs dropped a courtesy rude,
As with cracked voice and weak,
She poured her simple story out,
While tears coursed down her cheek.

"Dear ladies, here my missis *lives* —
I 'm sure you all must know her.
She was the belle of the whole State,
A daisy, a sweet clover!
And here, too, once lived I; but, oh,
Those happy days are gone —
My name 's Mariar Turpentine,
And now I live alone!

"Folks say that things are better so —
I 'm sure I cannot tell.
The strong, and young, and vagabond,
Such ways may like full well;

But take a loving nigger, miss,
A nigger such as I —
Our hearts broke when we were set free,
To wander forth and die.

" My name 's Mariar Turpentine,
And in the yard you see
Behind the house, I played a child,
Under the big oak-tree.
With my young missis up and down
I chased the butterfly;
Or conjured doodles from the sand —
No happier child than I.

" My name 's Mariar Turpentine —
I wish that you had seen
My missis as she stood a bride
In white and silver sheen!
'T was I, upon her golden hair,
Who placed the veil and wreath;
The sweetest face in all the world
Smiled out on me beneath.

" She said, ' Life is a rosy dream '—
Within a year there came
A tiny baby to the house
Who bore its mother's name.
'T was I who hushed the little one,
In the carved rocking-chair;
Or walked it slowly up and down
In the cool morning air.

"Each little one that came to grace
The house, I 'd always take
And nurse it tenderly as mine,
For my dear missis' sake.
But the brave twins I loved the best,
And cherished as my own —
They were far dearer than the rest;
But now they 're gone, they 're gone!

"For, oh, there came an awful day!
Forth to the Northern war
My fair young masters marching went,
From me, oh, very far!
Their forms again I 'll never see
Until I tread the street
All paved with diamonds up above
With golden slippered feet!
Oh, there are mansions, mansions,
Oh, many mansions fine!
And there her brave young masters wait
Mariar Turpentine.

"Their forms are laid to rest, they say,
On the Ohio's bank;
And in the songs to come their names
Will with great heroes rank.
What is grim war to such as me?
It drove me from my home!
My fair young masters I would see.
Come, Angel Gabriel, come!

And to those mansions, mansions,
Those many mansions fine,
To meet her boys with songs will rise
Mariar Turpentine!

"My missis she is growing old,
She 's gathered in her corn;
And sits so still, a tired dove,
Her gentle face all worn;
It breaks my heart to look at her,
But early every day
I come my dearest miss to see
Along this same pathway.

"Swing low, sweet chariot, while I sit
Beside my missis' chair!
I would not part from her to mount
A single golden stair!
But take us both together
To those many mansions fine,
Where there 's no emancipation for
Mariar Turpentine!"

We saw her pass the wicket,
And limp across the grass
To where the great hall door stood wide,
And then we saw her pass
In to her well-beloved,
While we went on our way
With eyes yet dim and softened hearts,
To where our carriage lay.

Never in all my wanderings
Have I e'er chanced to meet
A soul so filled with faithful love,
Loyal, devoted, sweet
As thine, Mariar Turpentine,
Thou poor, black, alien child;
Daughter of toil, and slave on earth,
Yet noble, steadfast, mild!
And so, I twine this simple wreath
Of long leaved Southern pine,
And lay it humbly at thy feet,
Mariar Turpentine.

Athens, Alabama.

MISCELLANIES

AFTERGLOW

HEN Phœbus drove his shining car
Over the mountain's crest,
The brilliant Oreads thronged in troops
Upon its rocky breast,
Clothed in such robes of filmy gauze,
As nowhere else were seen —
Violet, crimson, gold and blue,
Black, and the palest green.
"Farewell, great Phœbus! fare thee well!"
They waved their hands and cried,
Then scattered to their sheltered caves,
And all the glory died!

SPRING

HE golden dandelions here and there
Lift their bright heads and seek to breathe the air;
And an adventurous robin now and then
Chirps to his mate, reminding her of when
They will be building nests within the glen
Surrounded by a singing, noisy rout.
Then, if you love me, you will find me out.

The silver pussy-willows on the hill,
Survey below the free and gurgling rill
That has been hushed for many a weary day.
Again the little darting fishes play
Beneath its waves, chasing the shadows gray
Reflected on the stones. With a glad shout
The Spring has come, and you must find me out.

The brown horse-chestnut buds begin to swell,
And dog-tooth violets bestrew the dell;
The uplands, where but now cold snow was seen,
Are radiant with the fresh and brilliant green
Of winter-wheat; there will the reapers glean
Sheaves in the autumn — crows fly all about —
Now, if you love me, you will find me out.

All nature throbs expectant in the dawning,
'T is of the year the rosy-tinted morning.
Already by the wood-path I can see
Thy flower, sweet Cypris, pale anemone.
Soon will come roses and the honey-bee.
Sing, sing, mad birds! Raise high the joyous shout!
I know he loves me and will find me out!

THROUGH THE MIST

Veil after veil will lift, but there must be
Veil upon veil behind.

Sir Edwin Arnold.

SEATED before that mimic stage,
On which we see from age to age,
Our human life portrayed —
The summer smiles of Comedy,
The wintry sighs of Tragedy,
In scenic pomp arrayed —

The play becomes a play no more,
The curtain is our own heart's door;
Breathless, we spellbound gaze,
To see revealed our very lives,
Our joys and sorrows, smiles and sighs,
Our calm and stormy days.

Again the curtains slowly part,
And there by the creative art
Of the great poet's might
Are sylvan brooks, and leafy trees,
And singing birds, and humming bees —
A most enchanting sight.

Nor this alone, the artist's hand
Proveth itself a wizzard's wand;

Veil after veil will rise,
Each one revealing fairer scenes,
Until the charmed spectator deems
He sees beyond the skies.

A like experience falls to each,
When true affection comes to teach,
The power of soul on soul.
'T is not at first our friends we know,
Day after day new graces show,
Virtues and thoughts unroll.

Happy the friendship where the years
Add smiles to smiles, not tears to tears,
And lead us gently on
From scenes of simple joy to those
Whose beauties fairy bliss disclose,
The Golden Age recome!

But ah, alas for human love!
The scenic artist sought to move
Only to mirth serene;
In mortal love and mortal life,
Remorse and passion, turmoil, strife,
Wrong and despair, are seen.

As travelers to an unknown shore,
Who through the mist see hardly more
Than outlines dim and vast;
So I, too, through the cloud and storm,
View with affright the looming form
Of thy wave-beaten past.

If from thy life, before my eyes,
Veil after veil should slowly rise,
Revealing, not repose,
But carking care, and deep regret,
And eyes with recent tear-drops wet,
Instead of airy shows,

I must not therefore backward shrink,
But on my own shortcomings think,
As they appear to One,
Who sees not with the human eye,
But does each secret thought espy,
Each duty left undone.

When retribution smites thy heart,
How may I best perform my part,
How learn to be thy stay?
Where win the strength to keep my voice,
And bid thy fainting soul rejoice,
Despite the shadows gray?

There is no other way for me,
But the lone path of Calvary.
Of thorns must be my crown.
I, too, the cross must humbly bear
On the steep heights with patient care -
No other way is known.

TO THE MOON

ID the vast fields of nature, where, O moon,
Exists thy peer in majesty and grace?
Where, anything whose beauty stirs my heart
Like the effulgence of thy silver face?

Though in obscurity must ever lie
The soft luxuriance of thy streaming hair,
I know, O Virgin Huntress of the bow,
That all pertaining to thee must be fair.

Through sunny centuries in the Golden Age,
Thou, O Athene, taught the seers of Greece
To tune the lyre and sing in graceful verse
Songs of the gods, of love, and war, and peace.

'T was thee, Diana, who the shepherd lad
Endymion did wake from boyish slumber,
And lull him back to sleepy bliss the while
With thy clear voice, tuned in harmonious number.

Queen of the Night, thou drawest the stormy sea,
In ceaseless tides along the shifting sand;
And all the merchant-navies of the world
Sail at the word of thy august command.

When Luna bends to kiss the pouting waves,
Forth on the water in her amber train
Float forth frail barks, freighted with joyous life,
Filling the air with music's sweetest strain.

Most feminine of planets, Cynthia,
Now smiling, and now hiding thy fair face,
I recognize a sister in thee, Moon;
Grant me among thy worshipers a place!

Thou wast with fiery Romeo when he sought
His girlish mistress in the garden-close;
But Juliette blushes not to meet thy face,
Thou art the Friend of Lovers, she well knows.

Most Constant Friend, there is no land on earth,
Where thy familiar face I may not see;
But the loved home where thou dost "softly sleep"
Is orange-scented, ruined Italy.

Recumbent on an ivy-covered wall,
In dreamy half repose a form I see;
The silver drapery of her slender limbs
Proclaims the sleeper lovely Selene.

Serenely sailing Artemis, thy charms
Are sung in Attic and Sicilian lays;
The Hindu sitar and the Persian lute,
O Star-Crowned Goddess, celebrate thy praise.

Nor these alone; Provençal troubadour,
Icelandic skald, and English lyrist, lay
Their offerings on thy shrine, thou Cloud-Veiled One.
Orient and Occident their homage pay.

But unto me, you never fairer seem
Than when in languor you do softly rest,
Recumbent on the Seneca's blue wave,
All in a shimmering, golden mantle dressed.

There gently rocked, breathing the fragrant air,
Scented with perfume of the blossoming grape,
I learned to love thee, mistress of my heart,
Pallas, Athene, Lady of the Lake.

THE SONG WHICH MINNUCCIO D'AREZZO SANG TO KING PEITRO

LOVE, who sweetly cometh to young hearts,
Gilding their lives with thine own rosy hue,
With pity look on me, a simple maid,
Thy lowly vassal and thy servant true.

Naught am I but a little, humble flower,
A modest violet hiding from thy sight.
Yet, since that bitter and yet blissful hour
When thou didst touch me with thy glowing light,

When, with a sudden, sharp, and bitter pang,
I knew that thou didst rest thy beams on me:
Lifting my head and gazing on thy face,
Have I not offered incense unto thee?

And now, I ask that thou wilt pity take,
Grant me the boon I ask with my last sigh;
Tell him my love, I pray thee for Love's sake,
And I will bless thee, fold my leaves, and die!

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

John Henry Newman.

I struggle toward the light, and you,
Once longed-for storms of love,
If, with the light, ye cannot be,
I bear that ye remove.
Matthew Arnold.

ITHIN the spirit or without — I know not —
Exist the visions of the good I see,
While through this world as pilgrims we are passing,
They come to help weak women — you or me;
Brought by our guardian angels in still moments
To lighten darkness, hold us lest we fall.
For you, O precious visions of great beauty,
I yield love, sympathy, protection — all!

Light of the World, lead on, and I will follow,
Though still but dimly I thy glory view!
The slightest glimpse of thy surpassing goodness,
The faintest dream of what is pure and true,
From blossoming gardens where I love to wander,
With a compelling voice must call me back,
Though I have roved to eastward or to westward,
To the safe path — the narrow, beaten track.
Oh, not for all were made the flowery meadows!
Not every boat can sail the boundless sea,
And not in freedom or emancipation
Can my frail feet, dear Lord, e'er follow thee!

Bound? Thou wast bound. Hampered? Thou wast
restricted.
Tempted? "In all things tempted as thou art."
In ignorance? O thou, my Lord, hast spoken,
"No, not the Son, the Father knows apart."
Not on the uplands of supreme position,
But in the lowly valleys thou didst tread;
To stupid people was thy destined mission;
Often thou hadst not where to lay thy head.
Bound be my feet! my hands tied stiff behind me!
Hedged in by stringent laws on either side!
My eyes fixed on the ray of light before me,
Thus in the narrow path may I abide!

The way is cold, and colorless, and painful?
True; but here only I the vision see,
Though it lead over snows and rushing torrents,
I still have something that doth comfort me!
AMBITION, wreath I gathered in the morning,
Beautiful thou art, I let thee fall;
For to this world, with accents all-persuasive,
Thy honeyed voice my heavy feet recall.
But LOVE, thou splendid blossom of high noonday,
Closer unto my bosom thou art pressed.
Warming, consoling, tho' the way be weary,
Thou in thy fated haven there shall rest.
But no, thou, too, must go — the light grows dimmer!
There, I will lay thee on this rugged shrine
Wet with my tears — oh, see, the clouds are breaking!
Beauty of Holiness! O Light Divine!

PARAPHRASES FROM CANTICLES

CANTICLES, v. 2

LEEP folds my eyelids down,
Movelessly lies my form,
Naught stirs; nor smile or frown
Disturbs my slumbers.
But now, in softest numbers,
Falls my beloved's voice upon my heart—
"Turn not away," it pleads,
"Open the chambers of thy soul to me
And let me enter, for an angel leads!"
Can I repulse this mystic presence borne
Like the faint light that ushers in the morn?
He enters and in silence dwells apart—
None else his throne shall share;
And sleep is life, for my beloved is there!

CANTICLES

The Man's voice, iv. 12, 13, 15.
The Bride's voice, iv. 16; viii. 6.

ET me upon thy heart, a living seal,
Closing its entrance to all other loves,
Making a sacrament of all you feel,
So that no evil impulse ever moves
Within its quiet glades.
But all within is peace and pleasant life,
And from it never strays thy Queen of Maids,
But sits enthroned beneath the sylvan shades.

Come, my beloved, let us now go forth,
And wend our way among the mandrake flowers!
For through the day no breezes from the north
Have come to chill the soft and sunny hours.
The tender grapes are yielding a good smell,
The spik'nard and the saffron odors give,
And oh! my simple language cannot tell
The varied fruits that in the garden dwell.

I am thy garden, ever safely locked;
I am thy spring shut up, thy fountain sealed;
At the closed door no stranger's hand hath knocked,
To drink those waters; none but thou hast kneeled.
No, I have kept them as a holy shrine,
Inviolably sacred unto thee,
All the enjoyments are supremely thine,
And shall remain so till the end of time!

CANTICLES, viii. 1

H, that thou my brother wert!
I would follow by thy side,
O'er the hill or meadow wide,
I would still with thee abide.

Or beneath a sycamore,
Sheltered from the midday sun,
Darting rays like gold that 's spun,
We could hear the torrent run.

Never would a blush of shame
Mantle o'er my placid cheek,
I would frankly to thee speak,
And thy eyes my own would seek.

And my lips would seek thy lips,
Pressing guileless kisses there,
In whose sweetness both would share,
To rebuke us none would dare.

From Damascus, or Baalbec,
Far away, a slender band,
Like a serpent or a wand,
Caravans wind o'er the sand.

But they would not know that we
Sat beside this mountain spring,
Would not hear our voices ring,
Or the brown Cicales sing—

No, beloved, 't is better thus;
Solitary you must go
On the hillside sad and slow,
O'er the paths the white flocks know,

All the hot and lonely day;
But at the eventide returning
When the star of love is burning,
And for me thy heart is yearning,

I will to the lattice come,
Draw my veil of gauze aside,
Reach my hand, whate'er betide,
Feel it pressed unto thy side.

Sweeter far is such a love,
Full of perils, hopes, and fears,
Whispered words which no one hears,
Changing swift from smiles to tears!

CANTICLES, ii. 17; viii. 14

EFORE the dawning and the heat of day,
To the Spice Mountain let us haste away!

The watch-tower on Amana seen afar,
Gleams in the distance like the morning star.
Bring forth the camel! — mounting, you and I
Will speed on northward under the blue sky.

Before the dawning and the heat of day,
To the Spice Mountain let us haste away!

Over the plain speed on! On either side
Stretch the low-lying hills where robbers hide.
Hark to that cry! The leopard and his mate!
Speed on! Speed on, past the walled city's gate!

Before the dawning and the heat of day,
To the Spice Mountain let us haste away!

The day draws on; I feel a sudden chill.
Urge on the camel over yon steep hill!
Towering beyond I see the mountain dark,
I hear the sound of rushing water — hark!

Before the dawning and the heat of day,
To the Spice Mountain let us haste away!

Behold, on high the first faint rosy glow!
Red as the blood of Tamuz grows the snow!
Inhale the odorous flower-scented air —
Ah, see above thy cedar palace fair!

Before the dawning and the heat of day,
To the Spice Mountain let us haste away!

Awake, ye winds, and on the flowers blow!
Ye streams of Lebanon, your waters flow!
Open, ye gates, and to his garden fair,
Enters my well-beloved with raven hair!

Before the dawning and the heat of day,
To the Spice Mountain let us haste away!

DEDICATIONS, ETC.

TO THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO MY BIRTHDAY BOOK

THE poet Poliziano once did sing
Of gathering flowers in the balmy spring;
On every side were violets white and blue,
And lilies wonderful with many a hue,
And each one sparkling in the morning dew,
While fairest maidens round his neck did fling
Garlands of roses on that day in spring.

But I, more daring, wandered forth to seek
Lilies and roses when the snow was deep;
Not fresh young leaves, but icicles were clinging
To the bare boughs where once the birds were singing;
Across the meadows winter blasts were ringing,
Each rill maintained a hush profoundly deep:
The frost embraced them in a dreamless sleep.

There, as I stood all pale and sorrowing,
Came gentle friends and, forming in a ring,
Sang melodies of love unchanged and true,
Crowned me with blossoming wreaths of every hue,
The dewdrops were their loving tears I knew;
And thus, oh well belovèd, ye did bring
To my dark winter a warm breath of spring.

VALENTINE TO MRS. AMÉDIE GASQUET JAMES, 1880

STOOD upon the beach one summer day,
Watching the opalescent ripples play,
Each one reflecting in its upturned face
(As they stole onward with their quiet grace)
The face of Indra gazing from above
With smile benignant and serenest love.

And toying with the pebbles in the sun,
Tossing them in the water, one by one,
Watching their ever-widening circles spread,
Dim memories of a legend I had read
Came to my spirit, and all seemed to be
An emblem of this life, and you and me.

The Boodah sitting 'neath the Bodi-tree,
Teaching the simple folk about his knee,
Taught them that life, mysterious, deep and wide,
Was like the ocean with its ebbing tide;
And each white soul was like a drop of dew,
Lost in the ocean of the Good and True.

The pebbles as they fell, now here, now there,
Vanished from sight and left but sea and air;
Yet swelling circles told where they were laid
Beneath the moving current in the shade;
Those ever-spreading rings did meet and blend,
As life with life, or soul with soul of friend.

Like to those covered pebbles are our souls,
O'er them life's moving sea forever rolls;
Their visible exponent to the eye,
The never-ending circles sweeping by.

Lady, I beg your gentle eyes to shine
On the poor verses of thy Valentine.
And, though he play a too presumptuous part,
Deeming his awkward pen can ape the art
Of the great poet, pray excuse his pride;
For, is he not a portion of the tide
Of which you also form a gleaming wave?
Even an humble scribbler might be brave,
Made so by knowledge that the great Unknown
Had caused his little wave to touch thy own!

TO BEVERLY CHEW

With Sir Thomas Brown's "Religio Medici."

XCUSE his youth, his well-cut edges, too,
His crimson garments which are all too new;
New England thread with which his back is braced,
And New-York gilt with which his side is chased!
Learn from him charity to all mankind,
And in fair Nature Nature's God to find.
See the Divinity within thy breast,
And in his perfect wisdom take thy rest.
His humor's gentle flow will lead thy mind
Along its margin gems of wit to find,
While tender love and friendship's steadfast grace
Adorn his pages as they do his face.

TO WILLIAM TOD HELMUTH, M. D.

With the "Religio Medici."

ONG have I wished to bring to you, my friend,
This Oxford worthy, this Paduan sage,
M. D. of Leyden, from Montpellier,
Whose wit and wisdom run from page to page
Like a calm stream, bearing upon its breast
Quaint mystic thought, and broadest charity,
Compeer of Bacon, Harvey, and Pascal,
Admired by Johnson, Evelyn, Digby.

At length I found him, marred and poorly clad
In motley garments made in modern guise;
To fit them his broad margins had been cut
To but a duodecimo in size.
I could not shame the alchemist and seer,
By so presenting him to one whom he
Would doubtless, living, warmly clasp by hand,
And claim a brother in philanthropy.

But now, more fitly clothed in crimson robes,
Such as that fairest Paduan graduate,
Young Portia, wore when first she visited,
To mete strict justice, the Venetian state.
The cavalier stands at your study door:
Open, I pray, with that urbanity
You fail not to extend to learned men,
And ever have extended unto me.

FROM YE SOLILOQUY OF YE BIBLIOMANIAC

WRITTEN FOR BOWEN WHITING PIERSON.

H, talk not to me of far Araby's daughters!
My heart it is set on octavos and quartos;
Then talk not to me of far Araby's daughters!

There are many fair dames at the Cape of Good Hope,
But I greatly prefer Mr. Crashaw and Pope;
So, waste no laudations on dames of Good Hope.

On the slopes of tall Andes dwell maids of Peru,
But in polish they will not compare with Carew;
So I 'll not deign a glance at the maids of Peru.

Oh, tell me no more of the girls of Cathay!
When I have as companion our Yankee, John Hay,
Why try to attract me with girls of Cathay?

As for women of Anam, Sumatra, or Obi,
I scorn all their graces, and give them the "go-by";
I peruse Bishop Corbet, not beauties of Obi.

'T is in vain! 'T is in vain! seek no more to beguile,
By describing the slender ghawazees on Nile!
On the great Brahmapootra, and in Kandahar,
Are Nautch-girls more lovely and graceful, by far —

But I care not for either, nor Persian Gulf peris,
Nor Daphnis, nor Psyche, nor sorrowful Ceres!
When I see on my table a volume of Keats,
I have no idle longing for soft cushioned seats
'Neath the shadows of palm-trees, where oft on the air
Sweet dancing bells tinkle — no, I do not care
For these beauties of earth, nor for famed Aphrodite
(A lady I 've always considered too flighty),
Great Pallas Athene, a learned Greek maid,
Is the damsel to whom all my devoirs are paid!
Then give me, oh give me a book I adore,
And I 'll open and read, nor soliloquize more!

NOCTURNES

TEMPERAMENT

E hear just now of Temperament a deal,
Which seems to mean, *do always as you feel.*
If you feel cross, be cross; if envious, complain;
If discontented with your lot, tell all the world the same.
In fact, act just cantankerous, be prickly as a pin,
And lay the blame on Temperament, and not at all on Sin.

I know a man whose Temperament has led him to erase
The signatures from documents and all the dates efface;
And other men have Temperaments for stabbing with sharp knives,
And others still, have Temperaments for loving neighbors' wives —
If I were queen in Arcady I 'd not be taken in,
But call these things the proper name, *not Temperament, but Sin.*

ONE OF THE "FOUR HUNDRED"

LITTLE karma for the rich and gay—
" Prosperity 's the outcome of our past; "
A little scorn for sinful, sick, and weak;
A little love—perhaps a little fast;
A little higher ether, breathed through Harris,
A little cloak and bonnet just from Paris.

How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And lose the joys the butterfly
Imbibes from every flower!

Love that hath not expression found,
Is like to written music without sound;
'T is like to spring without a flower,
Or April day without a shower.

À PROPOS OF CLUBS

"THE fifth wheel to a wagon"—
How superfluous it seems!
A thing to point a moral,
Or inspire vapid dreams;
And so, a woman's army,
Woman's navy, church, or club,
Are like fifth wheels unto wagons,
Not essential like the hub.
The money spent upon them
Could be better spent, by far,
In getting up communion
With the furtherest fixed star.
I 've been thinking if our country
Ever suffered from a raid,
I would rather be defended
By a *man* than by a *maid.*
And if some future Congress
Declare a civil war;
I trust that *lads* not *lasses,*
Will blockade each harbor-bar.
As the human, like all races,

Is represented by the male,
A *priest* and not a *priestess*
Should stand within the veil;
And as the gift of silence
Is a woman's highest grace,
She needs a club no further
Than two noses on her face.

ODE TO THE DIVINE FEMINA

By the Signorita Higelti Pigelti.

BLESSED Girl! O Divine Femina!
Forgive the humble scrip I write to thee,
Measuring with little all thy sum of good!
I cannot sharpen pencils, climb a tree,
Or do a thousand things quite possible to thee;
But, when the moon obliterates the sun,
How lackadaisical shall man become!
When Juno wields the thunderbolt, and Jove
Sits knitting stockings by the kitchen stove,
When breathing ether we shall need no food,
And being sinless, we shall all be good,
Then, then, I 'll ever sing melodiously,
"We like to him, and he just like to We!"
When man in woman shall absorbed be,
Then every woman to the woods will flee
With monads for her mystic company;
Yea, where the woodbine twineth she shall be!

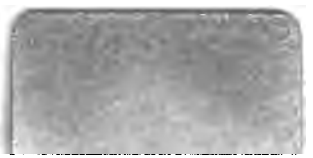
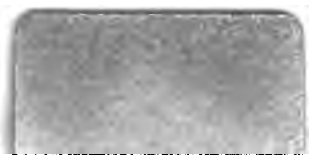
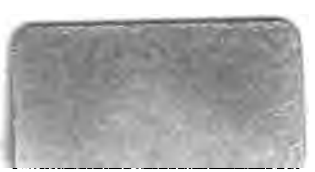
THEOSOPHICAL INVOCATION

WEET spirits of niter, with stars on your brows,
Come, come to me now, I am sick and would drowse!
O come, with your grave esoteric pretense!
O come, I am weary of pain and of sense.
Sweet spirits of niter, of lavender, come,
And waft me away to the Theosophs' home,
Where Yogis, Mahatmas, Gurus, Tschudi-Lamas,
Await inspiration from Thibetan Boodas!
Oh, pray send a gentle Mahatma to me,
Who will order the dinner and pour out the tea,
Who will smooth down the laundress and do the cook brown,
And leave me in quiet to study Troy Town,
Sweet spirits of lavender, camphor, and niter,
Pray come to me now, *that my spirits be brighter!*

THE DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE FEMINA

As expressed in an old song.

JOHN ANDERSON, my Joe John,
I pray you, take the cake!
But as you cannot, then, John,
I 'll do it for your sake.
I 'll take the cake from you, John,
And you for me can die;
John Anderson, my Joe John,
I 'm you, and you am I!

John Anderson, my Joe John,
Don't say to me "too thin,"
John Anderson, my Joe John,
He 's she, and she is him!
The man is in the swamp, John,
The woman is at sea—
John Anderson, my Joe John,
He 's her, and she is he!

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